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Man never is, but always TO BE blest.
POPE.

MAN. The probationer of happiness.
FENTON.

ABULCASEM was the son of ignoble but wealthy parents in a small town on the borders of Persia. His father, a man of no education, and of little acquired knowledge beyond the common routine of life, nevertheless provided his son with every means of becoming permanently useful to his family & to society. The whole extent of his father's wealth was open to Abulcasem; whatever he wished was at his command, and every want was immediately gratified.

But amid this enjoyment, Abul-
=casem was unhappy. He sighed for
what he knew not, and dragged on
his existence without pleasure &
without satisfaction. His sadness
threw a gloom over every exertion,
and every enjoyment. From being the
life of every company he was in,
he became a trouble wherever he
appeared; the smiles of mirth with-
=ered as he approached, and the
freedom of exhilaration was fettered
in his presence.

He at length resolved to quit his
native town, and seek in foreign
lands that pleasure which he could
not find at home. He communica-
=ted his intention to his parents; &
they fondly hoped on their part,
that the variety of scenery he would
meet with in his journey, the
diverse characters he would have to
encounter, would restore him to
his former self. They thought he
might have sleep to the splendor

of courts in foreign lands, where his birth was unknown; a circumstance which had effectually prevented his ever visiting the court of his own sovereign.

He accordingly set out, buoyant with expectation, and exultant with hope. After a week's travelling, during which the variety of objects amused his mind, and cast over it a temporary cheerfulness, he reached a flourishing city, not many miles distant from Ispahan, the capital of Persia. There seemed as he entered to be preparations making for some great event, which he soon learnt was the marriage of one the chief persons in the town. As he sat in a caravanserai, the respectability of his appearance attracted the notice of a stranger, who, after introducing himself to his acquaintance, promised to procure that of Miamoun, the chief personage already mentioned. Abulcasem thanked

him for the offer, and accompanied Al-dalfour, (which was the stranger's name,) to the house of Miamoun, who received him with great attention, and invited him to take up his abode in his palace.

Here he remained for three or four weeks. Every countenance had a smile, every heart seemed bursting with joy. The marriage was celebrated with unexampled pomp, and the consequent festivities completely banished from Abulcasem's mind every trace of unhappiness and discontent. He imagined he had gained the summit of his earthly hope. Al-dalfour was with him continually; and his attachment to Miamoun appeared so ~~bright~~ strong to the eye of Abulcasem, that he could not conceive how Miamoun ever could be unhappy, blest as he was besides with the possession of a wife lovely as the Houris.

He had hitherto studiously concealed his birth, and therefore had declined going to Ispahan, where he was apprehensive it would be discovered. After a while however he was persuaded to go; and having made what alteration he could in his personal appearance without exciting suspicion, he accompanied Al-dalfour. While he was there, he was one day suddenly recognised by an old acquaintance; but with a sudden presence of mind, he appeared to take no notice of his friend, & passed on without speaking to him. Al-dalfour however had observed it, traced the stranger out, & discovered the whole mystery:- a piece of information, the suspicion of which he concealed from Abulcasem.

He became now uneasy in Ispahan; and prevailed upon Abdalfour to return to Miamouni's palace. When they reached that place, all was

yet festivity and mirth. But the seeds of unhappiness had taken fresh root in his mind, and he sickened amidst it all.

One evening, as he was wandering alone in the gardens, he left the part where the company were assembled, to go to a more sequestered spot. As he gazed through the beautiful shrubbery, and beheld the dancers tripping down their light mazes, surrounded by foliage, and illumined by the light of a thousand variegated lamps; as he looked on forms lovely beyond conception, and heard music calculated to wrap the senses in a sweet delirium of joy, it seemed to him like the bowers of paradise, and the gardens of the immortal Houris. But he felt too, that he had no real enjoyment; that his heart was sad, while his senses were enraptured; and he struck into a dark & narrow path, where the

light of the lamps only occasionally cast a faint gleam, & where the notes of the music were heard but at intervals, as the breeze brought them along.

He seated himself on a bank. As he sat, lost in meditation, and hushed in complete silence, he suddenly heard voices behind him, in an adjoining path. He listened. The voice he distinguished was that of Abdalfour. The other was a female voice;- as he afterwards conjectured, of a beautiful & favorite slave of the wife of Miamoun. The few words he caught made him listen with agonised attention. He heard them only discuss a plan for the murder of Miamoun, & Abdalfour's marriage with his wife. Amid the festivities of the occasion, these monsters had retired to brood on schemes of blood. He listened further. Abulcasem was to be compelled to marry the slave

that was with Abdallon at present; the secret of his birth had been discovered, and unless he did that, he was to be murdered likewise, or sent immediately away; - Miamoun's wife was to administer the poison to him herself — He heard no more. It was too revolting to human feeling to listen patiently. His heart beat violently, and he tried to speak. There was a thickness in his throat which choked his utterance; and the conspirators, hearing a noise near them, immediately fled.

Abulcasem arose from the earth. But he resolved to stay not another hour in this cursed scene of treachery. He wrote a hasty note to Miamoun, warned him of his danger; and leaving the palace, was soon beyond the confines of Persia.

"And this," he said as he went along the road, "is happiness! — Oh! there is no happiness on earth! My

own quiet home is far preferable to all such enjoyment; yea, sorrow itself is better than such pleasure!"—

Perfectly disgusted with the upper ranks of Society, he now sought enjoyment in the lower. In Buchaia he remained some time; he acquired friendships, and thought himself beloved & respected; time shewed him that his ideas were too sanguine, and that self-love and self-interest were superior motives in human action. He was displeased because all did not pay him the deference he required; because he found crime & cruelty still in men, as if he supposed that nature could be changed for him. He was disgusted because the happiness he sought did not come spontaneously. He accused men of every thing bad, and heaven of disorderly government. He learnt to hate the song of industry as it rose on his ear in

the morning, & the hymn of contented ~~poverty~~ quiet. They told him of pleas-
=ures he could not enjoy; and when he endeavored to participate in them, he found himself considered as an officious intruder, who had neither claim nor privilege to join in them.

He resolved to bury himself amid the recesses of nature. "At least," thought he, "these men shall not disturb my bosom. My sorrows are all derived from him, and there he cannot come."

He accordingly made the best of his way into the beautiful Indian province of Cashmere. He left the smiling cottage, and the peaceful hamlets, & plunged into the depths of solitudes & forest. He deserted the haunts of men, and took up his abode with the bare face of nature. For a while his eyes were charmed & rivetted by every object he beheld.

Extensive lawns, sprinkled with pearly dew, studded with flowers whose radiance & whose beauty he had never seen equalled, arose before his sight. Forests, rich with every tint of variegated verdure, lifted their proud foliage to the skies, and formed a fine contrast to the hills, whose tops gleamed with the refulgence of the sun glittering on eternal snow. Beautiful cascades murmured from the rocks; the flowery vales were intersected by rivulets, where sported many a lovely tribe. Scenes, which have well entitled this ~~Persian~~ romantic province to the title of "the Paradise of India," met the eye of Abulcasem wheresoever it turned. The tempest and the whirlwind were there unknown. Dews, whose freshness gave new odors to the balmy air, descended upon the earth; & gentle showers at times watered the valleys, supplying the numerous

cascades with an unfailing store of waters, and dispensing fertility and fragrance wherever they descended. Songsters warbled in the groves, and the habitants of the woods bounded along with fleet & active steps. In a word, all seemed wrapt in lustre & eternal spring; the blasts of winter, and the scorching heat of summer were alike distant from this happy vale.

But amidst the beauty of these scenes, a melancholy sighed. In society he had found no entirely congenial bosom; and in solitude, he found that man was created for social enjoyment. Discontent had settled upon him, and nothing could alleviate it.

He went to the sea-coast, and after amusing himself till he was tired with the variety of new objects that presented themselves, he embarked on board a vessel bound for Ormus. But the scene was too

monotonous for his disposition, and he felt an unwonted relief in beholding the shore again.

He now gazed on men and things with apathy and indifference. He lived without object and without ambition. At length, a spark of his former activity, awoke, but brought with it a stronger feeling of unhappiness. He entered the army of the Persian sovereign. It was on its march to commence a new campaign against the Tartarians. The bustle of preparation, the noise of military life, partly succeeded in driving discontent from the soul of Abulcasem. But in the intervals of exertion, he would call to mind the quiet home he had left on a wild and uncertain search, and regret that he had ever done so. He began to suspect that the fault was all his own; and he had nearly resolved to return

home, when he was called upon to take a part in a decisive engagement with the enemy.

The battle lasted from sun-rise till the following midnight. The flames of conflagrated villages lent a ruddy & disastrous light to the combatants. The conflict terminated in the defeat of the Tartarians, but the Persians lost the flower of their army, and among them, Abulcasem was left for dead.

The returning light however of day shewed the reviving Abulcasem all the horrors of his situation. He arose, and binding up his wounds as well as he was able, resolved to proceed home if possible, to die. His native village was fortunately not very distant from the field of battle, and he hoped soon to reach it.

His parents were sitting at the close of a sultry summer's day, dis-

-cousing upon their long-absent son. No tidings of his fate had ever reached them, and they had begun to doubt that he any longer existed. As they spoke, a figure, pale, emaciated, & wounded, & in a military garb, approached their dwelling. They cast an eye of compassion upon him, and were devising how to relieve him, when, drawing nearer, he uttered a shriek, & fell. They ran to his assistance — it was their son!

Affecting indeed was the interview. The agitation of the moment caused the wounds of Abulcasem to burst afresh. A crowd had by this time assembled around the interesting group. He beckoned to them to approach; and as the last blood that warmed his veins was ebbing fast away, thus addressed them: —

"— Had I known that happiness

depends not upon outward circumstance; had I been convinced, that unless the mind accomodates itself to the allotment of providence, it cannot be contented; I never had been thus. Let youth learn from the unhappy Abuleasem, not to imitate his example. Let them not give way to the murmurs of discontent, & the repinings of insatiable desire. Let them live as heaven directs their lot. If they do otherwise, the curse of Allah will abide upon them. — Farewel! and be the last, the most fervent wish of my failing heart & this, that none of you live, and murmur, and perish like Abuleasem!" ——

E.